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Association of Citizens' Councils of Mississippi

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The St. Louis Story—

INTEGRATED SCHOOLS HURTING BOTH WHITE, COLORED PUPILS

The NAACP calls itself an organization for the advancement of colored people.

And integrated education is the chief point around which it has built its campaign for that "advancement."

The best means for colored people to evaluate the effects of the NAACP's high-pressure campaign, therefore, is to take a look at what is happening in integrated schools.

And since St. Louis is perhaps better known to colored residents of this area than any other city in which segregation has been abolished during the last years, it is worth our time in this area to note the effects of integration there.

Soldan High School, located on Union Boulevard, in St. Louis' middle-class west end, offers a typical example of changes that have occurred since the end of segregated classes one year ago this month.

In February of 1955 Soldan High was a school of 900 white children in a community which even then was yielding to the westward influx of colored families from the downtown area.

Today Soldan High has 1,400 pupils, of whom 500 are colored.

Integration is complete, the faculty even including seven negro teachers.

On the surface it might appear that the NAACP has won a valuable victory for the colored children of the area.

But unbiased semi-official reports on what has happened at the academic level in this typical integrated St. Louis school give cause for concern to colored parents as well as to white parents.

For colored children thrown into this middle class white school are failing their subjects in droves in spite of the lowering of academic standards to accommodate their slower pace.

Here, according to a report prepared by persons generally favorable to integration, is what happened at Soldan High last semester on the basis of the best interpretation that can be obtained from school records.

In English, 35 per cent of the negro students failed, compared with 5 per cent of the white students.

In American history, 25 per cent of the negro students failed, compared with 5 per cent of the white.

In general science, 60 per cent of the colored boys and girls failed, compared with 6 per cent of the white.

In physics, 30 per cent of the colored students failed, compared with 7 per cent of the white.

In geometry, 43 per cent of the colored students failed, compared with 5 per cent of the white.

In bookkeeping, 33 per cent of the colored students failed, compared with 7 per cent of the white.

On the basis of such reports, which represent the best available interpretation of class records from this typical integrated St. Louis high school, colored parents call well ask themselves:

"What do our children gain from being thrown into a school where a third of them fail their work and where in time they probably will become so discouraged they drop out of classes altogether?"

"Do they gain enough merely from attendance at mixed classes to offset the harm being done them by their inability to pass their work?"

"Would they not profit more from working at

a slower pace and thereby remaining in school through the twelfth grade than they will from mixed classes conducted at a pace which is faster than they either can go or care to go?"

Those are significant questions for colored parents as they ponder what the NAACP program will do to their children if it is successful here in the South.

And comment by teachers at this typical integrated St. Louis school give equal cause for concern to white parents whose children the NAACP would throw into classrooms with an even higher percentage of negroes—and with negroes who have not had the benefit of such good schools as St. Louis has been operating for its colored children.

Robert Lasch, an editorial writer of the St. Louis Post Dispatch, which strongly supports that city's integration program, makes the following observation in comment which is as nearly unbiased as one can find:

"The distribution of marks does not tell the whole story.

"Asked whether teachers have a tendency to make allowances for the poorer background or training of negroes and thus grade them more leniently than whites, Soldan faculty people say that the student who neither makes progress nor tries to do so is eligible for failure, but one who makes a discernible effort is sure of being passed even if no accomplishment is visible.

"Many intangibles enter into the grading process.

"Where one-third of a class, the colored group, is generally at a lower achievement level than the rest, the natural tendency is for them to draw most of the teacher's attention and energy while the rest find it easier to loaf through."

Then the St. Louis Dispatch editorial writer comments:

"Another situation taxing the faculty is the general tendency of negro students to be tardier to school, tardier to class, more prone to skip an afternoon's classes, and more inclined to absenteeism.

"Without reference to racial prejudice—and attributing the facts solely to differences in cultural and social or economic background, teachers say there is a definitely larger amount of slackness, irresponsibility and intellectual laziness among the colored students than among the whites.

"As one teacher said, there have always been poor students irrespective of color. But a sudden increase in their numbers can change the tone and pace of an entire class."

Thoughtful people, both colored and white, are justified in asking themselves, in view of such reports as this—and similar facts recently revealed by a study of integrated schools in Washington:

"What are colored children gaining from mixed classes that is worth the discouragement they suffer from repeated failure and eventual discontinuance of school work?"

"And what is America gaining from integration that can offset her loss from the seriously reduced pace of study being offered the brighter students upon which our nation depends for leadership in science, medicine, education, business and all the other fields which form the basis of our country's strength?"

"In Mississippi, in 1954, six negroes were killed by whites, eight whites were killed by negroes and 182 NEGROES WERE KILLED BY MEMBERS OF THEIR OWN RACE."

VENEREAL DISEASE INFECTIONS BY STATE AND RACE

From official records of States named.

STATE	Year	Total Infections	White Infections	Negro Infections	% Negro Infections	% State Negro Population	Incident % Negro Infection Divided by % Negro Population
Utah.....	1954	395	339	56	14.	0.4	35.0
Nebraska.....	1954	935	558	377	40.	1.4	28.5
Oregon.....	1954	1,182	934	248	19.5	0.8	24.3
Massachusetts.....	1954	4,184	2,458	1,394	33.3	1.6	20.8
Washington (Civilian).....	1953	2,218	1,182	658	25.	1.3	19.2
(Military).....		2,186	522	1,638	75.		
Illinois.....	1954	27,194	5,190	22,004	80.9	7.4	10.9
New Jersey.....	1954	9,108	2,785	6,323	69.	6.6	10.4
Ohio.....	1954	17,461	6,395	11,066	64.	6.5	9.8
Missouri.....	1954	6,645	2,529	4,116	61.9	7.5	8.2
Kentucky.....	1954	5,008	2,292	2,698	53.9	6.9	7.9
Tennessee.....	1954	18,658	2,927	15,731	84.	16.1	5.2
Florida.....	1954	18,986	2,539	16,447	87.4	21.7	4.0
Virginia.....	1954	13,272	1,987	11,285	85.	22.1	3.8
North Carolina.....	1954	18,608	2,229	16,379	88.	25.8	3.4
Georgia.....	1954	17,951	1,463	16,488	92.	30.9	2.9
Alabama.....	1954	7,367	766	6,601	90.	32.	2.8
Alabama.....	1955	6,064	634	5,430	90.	32.	2.8
Louisiana.....	1954	13,675	1,012	12,582	92.	32.9	2.7
South Carolina.....	1955	11,777	1,357	10,420	88.5	38.8	2.2
Mississippi.....	1954	11,560	690	10,870	94.	45.3	2.0

ILLEGITIMATE BIRTHS BY STATE AND RACE

From official records of States named.

STATE	Year	Total	White	Negro	% Negro	% Negro* Population	Incident % Negro Illegitimates Divided by % Negro Population
Oregon.....	1954	929	807	94	10.	0.8	12.5
Utah.....	1954	294	180	14	4.7	0.4	11.7
Missouri.....	1954	4,008	1,290	2,718	67.8	7.5	9.0
Illinois.....	1954	9,809	3,295	6,514	66.4	7.4	8.9
New Jersey.....	1954	2,926	1,254	1,672	57.	6.6	8.6
Ohio.....	1954	7,447	3,921	3,496	47.	6.5	7.2
Kentucky.....	1954	3,026	1,712	1,314	43.4	6.9	6.2
Tennessee.....	1954	6,012	1,609	4,401	73.	16.1	4.5
Florida.....	1954	7,202	1,240	5,962	82.8	21.7	3.7
Virginia.....	1954	6,794	1,587	5,207	76.6	22.1	3.4
North Carolina.....	1954	9,920	1,614	8,306	83.7	25.8	3.2
Alabama.....	1954	8,791	684	8,107	92.	32.	2.8
Georgia.....	1954	8,967	960	8,007	89.	30.9	2.8
Louisiana.....	1954	7,305	676	6,629	90.7	32.9	2.7
South Carolina.....	1954	7,153	678	6,475	90.5	38.8	2.3
Mississippi.....	1954	7,639	275	7,364	96.4	45.3	2.1

(* "% Population Negro" from U.S. Census Report 1950.)

The above reports on "Venereal Disease Infections by State and Race," and "Illegitimate Births by State and Race," point to some serious considerations, especially for those who condemn racial segregation and advocate racial integration.

It is interesting to note the much higher incidence of venereal disease infections among negroes in Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Ohio than is found in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana and other strictly segregated States.

A parallel situation is found in illegitimate births in those States, with the exception of Massachusetts. That State makes no record of illegitimate births. Several States have laws prohibiting such records. In many States such prohibition is part of the "Civil Rights Laws." We were unable to get information on these subjects from several States with "Civil Rights Laws." Does not such a "head in the sand" policy pose a serious threat to the public health and welfare of the nation?

It will be interesting to learn why venereal disease infections and illegitimate births are so much higher in Northern States.

Southern officials, both law and health, point to the moral restrictions inherent in segregation as the principal reason for the differences, and again remind us of the fact, so well known to Southern officials and seemingly ignored by our Northern neighbors, that the negro has such a strong proclivity for "mistaking liberty for license."

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